DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 226 SO 023 172

AUTHOR

Santoro, Lawrence

TITLE

From Puggy to Larry: Poetry from "Gathering

Light."

INSTITUTION

Midwest Philosophy of Education Society. 92

PUB DATE

NOTE

31r.; Paper presented at the Midwest Philosophy of

Education Society (Chicago, IL, November 14,

1992).

AVAILABLE FROM Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 5006 West

Grace Street, Chicago, IL 60641-3450 (\$10).

PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports -

> Descriptive (141) -- Creative Works (Literature, Drama, Fine Arts) (030)

EDRS PRICE

MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS

*Childhood Attitudes; *Cognitive Development;

Creative Writing; Developmental Stages; Educational Development; *Educational Philosophy; *Parent Child

Relationship; *Poetry; *Preadolescents

IDENTIFIERS

*Childhood Experiences; Egan (Kieran)

ABSTRACT

This paper contains a poetry reading presented to a meeting on poetic narrative and educational development. The presentation was based on the theory that the field of philosophy of education should include the realm of the possible as created and populated by the imagination, and often portrayed by works of art. The poems consist of attempts to represent childhood experiences from a child's point of view. They are poetic representations of a phenomenology of preadolescent cognitive development. Through the series of eight poems, the child (Puggy) becomes the little boy (Larry) by becoming able to distinguish self from other and advancing from a mythic to a romantic stage of development. A warning is included to the effect that the attempt to impose such adult terminology on this poetry may be destructive of the poet's work. Also included is a work in progress, a piece of prose that begins from an adult point of view when a morning brings back memories of long ago and childhood games. The poems are narrated by either Puggy the child, Larry the boy, or the poet as an adult. Each narrator could be identified as one of Kieran Egan's four stages of educational development. The mythic stage is identified with Puggy and encompasses the ages 4 through 10. The romantic stage is identified with Larry and ages 9 through 15. The philosophic state is represented by the poet and ages 14 through 20. The final ironic stage is ages 19 and over. (DK)



Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document. ***********************************

FROM PUGGY TO LARRY

Poetry From Gathering Light

by

Lawrence Santoro

3313 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60657-1603 (312) 327-9377

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-ment do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY 11CHAEL

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



TABLE OF CONTENTS: "From Puggy to Larry."

Program: Sixth Concurrent Session #1, Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 14 November 1992p3
Proposal to the Program Committee, 29 July 1992p4
BABY TALKp5
NANNA
THAT NAMEp9
FACTS OF LIFEp10
MAGICSp15
IN THE ATTICp17
DANCERp19
THE MAIN THINGp20
Appendix: WORK IN PROGRESS (1965)p25



- Program: Midwest Philosophy of Education Society:
 Sixth Concurrent Session #1: Loyola University Chicago,
 Marquette Center 30, 10 10:45 a.m., 14 November 1992.
- "FROM PUGGY TO LARRY": POETRY FROM CATHERING LIGHT.

 A poetry reading by Lawrence Santoro.
- Mr. Santoro is a published poet, a teacher of creative writing, and a director of educational theatre. He is employed by the Chicago Headline Club as Director of their famous Gridiron Show.
- I. Introduction: Poetic Narrative and Educational Development, by Michael A. Oliker, Midwest PES.
- II. Poetry Reading.
 - 1. Baby Talk. Narrator: "Author."
 - 2. Nanna. N: "Puggy"
 - 3. That Name. N: "Author"
 - 4. Facts of Life. N: Author / Larry / Puggy.
 - 5. Magics. N: "Puggy"
 - 6. In the Attic. N: "Larry."
 - 7. Dancer. N: "Larry"
 - 8. The Main Thing. N: Puggy / Larry.

- Appendix I: Kieran Egan's Four Stages of Educational Development.
 - A. Mythic Stage: Ages 4-10 (Puggy?)
 - B. Romantic Stage: Ages 9-15 (Larry?)
 C. Philosophic State: Ages 14-20 (Author?)
 - D. Ironic Stage: Ages 19+ (Is this possible?)

Appendix II: Bibliography.

- Egan, Kieran. Educational Development. New York: Oxford UP, 1979.

 "Teaching as Story-telling: A Non-mechanistic Approach to Planning Teaching." Journal of Curriculum Studies 17 (October December 1985): 397-406.
- . "Towards a Theory of Educational Development." Educational Philosophy and Theory 11 (November 1979): 17-36.
- Nyberg, David and Kieran Egan. "Toward an Educational Theory." Chap. in <u>The Erosion of Education</u>. New York: Teachers College Press, 1981.
- Santoro, Lawrence P. "Work in Progress." <u>Essence</u> (Kutztown, Pennsylvania) 6, no. 2 (May 1965): 26-31.
- Taube. Myron. "Why Every Teacher Should Be an Actor."

 The CEA Critic 22 (November 1960): 8-9.

#######

12



To: Program Committee, Midwest Philosophy of Education Society From: Michael A. Oliker, Member, Executive Committee Subject: Proposal for Poetry Reading by Lawrence Santoro

In his brief presentation to MPES in 1990, Harry S. Broudy suggested that "philosophy of education could claim as its territory the realm of the possible as created and populated by the imagination, and often portraved by works of art " William Russell's paper at the 1991 meeting on "Poetry for Philosophers of Education" was a step in the direction suggested by Broudy. With this in mind, I contacted Mr. Santcro -- an actor, director, and poet who has done many public readings here in Chicago -- and asked him to consider submitting a proposal for a poetry reading at the 1992 meeting of MPES. I believe that many of his poems would be of interest to MPES members because they consist of attempts to represent childhood experiences from a child's point of view. To use some rather technical jargon, I would describe these poems as poetic representations of a phenomenology of pre-adolescent cognitive development. The child Puggy becomes the little boy Larry by becoming able to distinguish self from other and advancing from a Mythic to a Romantic stage of development. (Of course this is to impose an adult terminology that may be destructive of Santoro's work.)

Mr. Santoro majored in philosophy at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania and completed a degree in theatre at Temple University. He did graduate work in theatre at Villanova. Santoro has directed theatrical productions at the elementary, secondary, and college levels and was an actor, writer, and director for a syndicated TV series. Currently, he is theatre columnist for a group of neighborhood newspapers in Chicago and is director of the Chicago Headline Club's annual Gridiron Show.

The proposed presentation could be squeezed into a 50-60 minute session. Santoro would like to read for 20-25 minutes. I would offer a brief commentary (8-10 minutes) as a basis for discussion. This should leave 15-20 minutes for discussion.

ADDRESSES:

Lawrence Santoro, 3313 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60657. Phone: (312) 327-9377.

Michael A. Oliker, 5006 W. Grace St., Chicago, IL 60641. Phone: (312) 202-9280.



BABY TALK

SOON THE WORLD IS MAGIC PLACED.

WHEN HUNGER'S FILLED, AND COLD DISSOLVES TO WARM DOWN 'ROUND YOUR TUMMY,

WHEN HARD DEFLATES TO SOFT AND SHINY BRIGHT BECOMES A MUTED PASTEL MURMUR;

THEN THE MAGICS START...

AND THE WORLD BEGINS TO HAVE AN ORDER

AND STRETCHES, CONNECTED, OUT FOREVER.

THE ONLY LAW THAT WORLD WILL HAVE IS MAGIC, THEN.

YOU WILL SEE SUCH WONDROUS THINGS THAT TICKLE YOU FOR EXPLICATION...

YOU'LL WONDER WHY...THAT MAN IN KILT AND TARTAN SASH STANDS UPON YOUR CORNER IN THE SUN

AND PIPES HIS WHEEZING SCREAM-BAG

AND FOR HIS MUSIC, THERE, BITES AND DRIBBLES DOWN HIS CHIN, A RIPE TOMATO OFFERED HIM, STREAMING JUICE AND SEEDS AND GRINS.

YOU'LL WONDER WHY THE STAIRWAY CREAKS BELOW WHEN YOU'RE ALONE, ABOVE

OR THE PHONE RINGS ONCE A NIGHT THEN WAITS -- UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT.

YOU'LL WONDER WHAT THEY DO IN THERE -- THE DRY OLD WOMEN IN THE CORNER HOUSE ALL BUSHY-DARK AND SHADOW-CURTAINED.

WHERE THE GRASS IS LONG AND WEEDY AND EATS FOREVER THE ROLLING BALL, THE ILL-TOSSED TOY;

WHAT THEY DO WITH TWIGGY FINGERS WHEN THEY PART THE DRAPES LIKE DUSTY BREEZE WITHIN AND PARCHMENT EYES LEAN OUT TO GRAB YOUR SOUL RUNNING PAST TO WARMER NEIGHBORS...

REMEMBER THE TERRORS, THEY ARE HOLY. KEEP THEM CLOSE TO HAND, IN MIND.

WHEN NIGHT IS FILLED WITH GLIMMER GLAMOUR,

AND THE SHADOWS BREATHE WHERE THE ALLEY BENDS DOWN INTO ETERNITY

AND THE BRANCHES TAP THE WINDOWPANE

AND THE STAIRS ARE DARK AT TOP



AND THE HALLWAY CREAKS DOWN THERE;

WHEN THE CLOSET FILLS WITH MONSTERS

AND THAT DEAD SPACE BETWEEN THE BED AND WALL BESEEMS A CAVE OF DREAD-SCALED AND SPINY FEASTING-BEASTS;

WHEN STORIES, BOOKS AND NIGHT-TOLD TALES BECOME THE WORLD AND WALK IN YOU THROUGH STREETS YOU'LL WALK, FOREVER...

REMEMBER: TIME IS NOT A RIVER BUT A PUDDLE, RATHER WHICH GROWS DOWN AND DEEPER AS YOU GET LONGER

AND THEY'RE THERE, BELOW; YOUR SHADOW BROTHER TERRORS...

HOLD THEM, KEEP THEM HOLY,

THEY, SADLY, DO NOT LAST FOREVER

BUT HOLD THE MAGIC IN YOUR HEAD.

IT WILL BE YOUR MIND, YOUR SOUL AND BEST FRIEND, LATER.

WHEN THE COLD RETURNS AND ALL THE WITCHES, DEAD.



NANNA

LATER, I NOTICED THE PICTURE ON THE MANTLE IN MY PARENT'S HOUSE.

FRAME OF METAL, CURLS AND CARTOUCHES, ENCLOSING THAT WOMAN, THAT LADY IN WHITE.

THAT LONG WHITE FEMALE LINE AGAINST HER TAPESTRY OF STAGS AND HOUNDS.

I KNEW IT WAS NANNA BUT HAD NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE LIKE THIS.

POP-POP HAD BEEN CUT FROM THE PICTURE HAD LEFT HER LONG AND ALONE, HER HAND DRIFTED OFF AT THE FINGER-TIPS WHERE HE ONCE SAT SOME 40 YEARS GONE.

I KNEW IT WAS NANNA BUT IT WAS NOT THE NANNA I KNEW.

THAT OLD WOMAN, THINNED BY LIFE, DRIED FROM WHITE TO ASH;

THAT OLD WOMAN, ICICLE-HARD, THUMP ON THE BOTTOM AND OFF TO THE PRICKLY CHAIR
TO WAIT THE TICK-TOCK STICKLY HOUR TIL DADDY RETURNS TO DEAL WITH ME.

THIS NANNA WAS WHITE AND SOFT AND GLOWED IN SILVER NITRATE HAZE OF DUST AND YEARS, OF DUST AND YEARS BEFORE MY BIRTH.

THIS WAS NOT THE NANNA WHO DIED IN MY HAND, HER FINGER TWIGS WRAITHED AROUND MY PLUMPING KNUCKLES, HER HANDS SOBBING SLOWLY UNTO SILENCE.

SUNDAY MORNING. DOWNSTAIRS, POP-POP IN THE KITCHEN. GABRIEL HEATER ON THE RADIO.

I, DRESSED FOR CHURCH BUT NOT READY FOR IT.

"COME, PUGGY. DON'T DAWDLE. TAKE MY HAND AND STOP ACTING LIKE AN I DONOWHAT. GOODNESS!"

THEN DOWN TWO STEPS.

PUMPING MY HAND. "OH, OH, OH, LARRY! I CAN'T SEE. CAN'T HEAR."

TWITCHING, WRITHING. WORDS SLIDING INTO NOISES, NOISES GOING

FUNNY IN THE THROAT.

TWITCH. WRITHE. BANG, BANG, THE HEAD AGAINST THE WALL.

FUNNY, NANNA. NANNA BEING FUNNY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE. NANNA WAS FUNNY.

I RAN TO POP-POP AND GABRIEL HEATER TO TELL: NANNA IS FUNNY, FINALLY FUNNY.

NOW NANNA WAS NEVER FUNNY. NOT NANNA.
NANNA OF THE DAINTY DISHES, OF DOILIES DELICATE.



NOT AT CARSONIA PARK WHERE THE ROLLER COASTER ROLLED WITHOUT ME.

"GOODNESS! ON THAT THING! I HEAR A MAN LOST HIS HEAD IN THE AIR UP THERE WHERE HE STOOD TO SHOW OFF." SHEARED BY THE "DON'T STAND" SIGN.

BUT NANNA WAS BEING FUNNY NOW!

OF COURSE, BY THEN, MY PARENTS HAD HEARD THE BEATING ON THE STAIRS
AND THE FUNNY OLD WOMAN, MY MOTHER'S MOTHER, BEING FUNNY
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER SON'S LIFE.

POP-POP OUT OF THE KITCHEN THROUGH THE HOUSE AND UP THE STAIRS. ALL OF US MEETING THERE TWO STEPS FROM THE TOP TO WATCH NANNA'S FUNNY.

I SAW MY POP-POP'S FACE. ONLY THAT, HIS NOSE AND JOWLS AND EYES. "YOU STOP THAT, NOW. YOU STOP THAT, HEAR!"

FUNNY NANNA.

DOCTOR KOTZEN CAME AND WENT. NANNA STAYED. LAID IN THE CENTER OF HER BED. HER BED WITH POP-POP. SHE SLEPT. MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY.

WATCHED HER BREATHE. THEN STOP.

AND, WORRIED ABOUT LAUGHING AT THE VIEWING, I BIT MY CHEEKS HARD INSIDE MY MOUTH...BUT DID LAUGH A LITTLE.

EVEN THOUGH I HAD KILLED HER, I COULD STILL FEAR LAUGHTER.

POP-POP SAID, "NANNA WAS DYING AND YOU WAS LAUGHING," POP-POP SAID.

GOODNESS! NANNA WOULD HAVE SAID. GOODNESS.

BUT NOT THAT BEAUTY ON THE MANTLE, THAT WHITE, ELEGANT SILVER LINE OF A WOMAN WHO SMILED FROM FORTY YEARS GONE AT THE SNOWY PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAINS OVER MY SHOULDER.

NOT THAT WOMAN. HER WORD WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GOODNESS.

I COULD LOVE HER, THAT WOMAN ON THE MANTLE. HONEST TO GOD, I COULD.

AND I COULD FORGIVE HER FOR BEING FUNNY NANNA WHOM I KILLED ONE SUNDAY ON OUR STAIRS WITH MY LAUGHTER.



THAT NAME

DEEP DOWN IN THERE, I'M STILL MY FAMILY'S NAMETHING: PUGGY;

THOUGH I NEVER UNDERSTOOD THE WHY OF IT

OR WHAT IT MEANT, I'M PUGGY, STILL...

AT THE CALL OF OTHERS, OLDER, WISER, STRONGER THAN I CAN EVER BE

IN SOUL, IN MIND, IN TIME IN FACT...

I AM PUGGY, THEN AND NOW.

THE KID IN SAILOR SUIT

WHO RUNS IN SCRATCHY BLACK AND FLARING WHITE

AMONG PENDORA'S TREES IN FLICKER-SHADES OF GRAY,

AND STANDS ON TEETER FEET BESIDE THE WATERFALL

AND YEARNS TO DIVE ON IN AND DOWN AND THROUGH THE FOAM

TO SWIM AWAY, THE WATER'S WAY...

FLOWING UNDERGROUND...

BUT STOPS AND TURNS AND WAVES AND SMILES AT SOMEONE UP AHEAD.

AND WAITS.

THEN, SNATCHED ON UP BY MOTHER'S ARMS,

IS SAVED.



FACTS OF LIFE

AFTER LOVE AND THE LONG GIGGLE-MAKING, SHRIVEL-TICKLE OUT OF HER;

AFTER HOLDING, OUR SEPARATE BEAUTIES SALTED WITH THE TASTE OF MEMORY,

AND THE SLOW EXFOLIATION OF OUR SKINS, BREASTS AND THIGHS, BELLIES AND BUSHES, PEELING BACK, UNTWINING;

AFTER LIPS AND TONGUE HAD CLEANED AND DRIED AND TIDIED HER; HER PARTS AND PLACES;

AFTER,
AND WHILE THE PUNGENCY OF OUR SLIPPERY LAST TWO HOURS CRUSTED,
DELICIOUS ON MY FACE;

AFTER, WHILE MY FINGERS, COMBING,

UNFOLDED HER PARTING LIPS IN AN ECHO, REMEMBERING...

REMEMBERING AFTER.

REMEMBERING THE LAST WORDS MY MOTHER GAVE, SENDING ME OFF TO 16TH AND HAAK...

PUSHING ME, SNUFFLING SNUFFLING THROUGH THE BROWNSTONE ARCH INTO THE REST OF MY LIFE...

BEFORE LETTING GO, A LITTLE BIT, FOREVER...

REMEMBERING MY MOTHER'S LAST SUGGESTION,

TUCKING, WETTING BACK THE COWLICK TUFT,
TURNING ME ROUND AND ROUND AT THE WHIRLWIND BORDER

WHERE OUR STREET DELINED THE PLAYLOT PIPES AND CHAINS, ITS BILLION BRUSHBURNS WAITING

POTENTIAL, NOW, IN SLICK BLACK AND BUBBLY ASPHALT REDOLENCE IN SEPTEMBER SUMMER REMNANT HOT AND BRIGHT.

REMEMBERING OUR FINAL LANGUAGE LESSON. THIS:

IF YOU HAVE TO GO
SAY NUMBER ONE OR NUMBER TWO.
NUMBER ONE IS TO TINKLE
NUMBER TWO IS TO MAKE YOUR UGLIES.
THEY WON'T KNOW THOSE WORDS. OUR WORDS.
THOSE WORDS ARE OURS.



REMEMBER: NUMBER ONE IS TO TINKLE NUMBER TWO IS TO MAKE YOUR UGLIES. YOU REMEMBER?

THIS GETS COMPLICATED BUT YOU HAVE TO LEARN SOMETIME

I WAS A QUIET KID. SHELTERED, PERHAPS... BY THE MOUNTAIN IN OUR YARD...

BY THE BOOKS BENEATH MY BED... BY THE OPERA, SATURDAYS...

BY MOTHER, NANNA, POP-POP AND DADDY.

AND IN MY TURN, I SHELTERED THEM FROM WHAT I WAS AND COULD BECOME.

BUT THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS:

THE COLORED GIRL -- BRENDA -- IN OUR CLASS WAS GOING TO HAVE A BABY.

HEAD DOWN, SILENT IN HER SIDE ROW, BACK-OF-THE-ROOM SEAT WHILE WE GIGGLED BY HER LAST FEW DAYS WITH US, THEN GONE.

GONE BACK TO THE PLACE WHERE THE ORPHANS LIVED.

ONE BLOCK UP, ONE BLOCK OVER. THE HOME, WE CALLED IT. 1010 CENTER AVENUE, MRS. FEINERFROCK CALLED IT.

SIXTH GRADE AND GOING TO HAVE A BABY!

"WHAT," MOTHER ASKED SUDDEN AND SLOW THAT EVENING, AFTER DINNER, DADDY AT THE PAPER, JUST FINGERS AND LEGS ON THE COUCH,

"WHAT...WOULD YOU DO IF SHE SAYS YOU ARE HER BABY'S FATHER?"

OH, GOD! OH, GULP!

GOD GULPING NOT AT FATHERING BRENDA'S BABY...
THAT WAS SILLY...

IT WAS MY MOTHER'S SLIDE ACROSS THE FLOOR TOWARD ME, WHICH GOD-ENGULPED ME.

HER PLIE INTO THE SEAT NEXT TO MINE AND HER PURR... "OH, PUGGY. YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE FACTS OF LIFE SOMETIME!"

IN FACT I KNEW THEM.

THAT LAST SUMMER --COUSIN FRED, UP FROM CHESTER, FOR THE YEARLY MELD OF FAMILY



KIDS --

OURS -- ME!
AND AUNT EDWINA 'N UNCLE JIM'S -- BARBARA, FRED AND GAIL -THE GERMANS...

COUSIN FRED BROKE MY LIFE ONE DAY THAT SUMMER TOLD THE TALE THAT DAY, ON THE WAY FROM THE MATINEE...

HOW DADDY AND MOMMY DID IT -- AND WHY!

"YOU KNOW WHERE -- DOWN THERE -- YOU HAVE YOUR THING? WELL, DOWN THERE SHE DOESN'T HAVE THAT. HASN'T GOT IT.

DOWN 'ROUND THE BELLY BUTTON SHE'S GOT NOTHING ... "

"SHE?"

"YOUR MOTHER. LESS THAN NOTHING. A HOLE DOWN THERE. AND WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE YOU PUT IT THERE..."

"IN THERE!"

"AND MOVE AROUND AND BACK AND FORTH AND PRETTY SOON IT FEELS REAL GOOD..."

"IN THAT HOLE DOWN THERE?"

"FEELS SO GOOD THEY SOON BEGIN TO HUG AND KISS."

"THEY DO?"

"THEY DO. AND THEN THEY HAVE A BABY, LATER."

"HAVE A BABY BECAUSE THEY LOVE EACH OTHER?"

"BECAUSE IT FEELS REAL GOOD," HE SAID. HE SAID, "THEY DO IT FOR FUN IS WHY."

FOR FUN!

I AM FOR FUN.

I!

FOR ONE PUMP AND STROKE OF FUN.

I!

WITH HIS THING, HIS TINKLER THING. AND HER THING, NO THING.

I!

I AM.



NOW, TINKLER FUN I KNEW.

IT GETS COMPLICATED BUT YOU HAVE TO LEARN SOMETIME THE SECRET.

SIXTEENTH AND HAAK. KINDERGARTEN. FIRST DAY...
NUMBER ONE AND NUMBER TWO DAY...

"NO, UH, LARRY," SHE SAID, "LARRY IS IT? ISN'T IT LARRY?" NOT NOW, LARRY. YOU HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL WE ALL CAN GO."

"DISCIPLINE," SHE SAID THIS LITTLE LADY PERSON,

THIS LEAN YOUNG LITTLE LADY, NOT MY MOTHER, NOT AN AUNT NOR NANNA THIS LADY SUDDENLY SUPREME, WITH POWER, COMPLETE, OVER NUMBER ONE AND NUMBER TWO,

WE'D ALL GO TOGETHER. AT ONE TIME... SHE SAID.

AND THEN, LATER. FOREVER LATER...
IN ROWS DOWN THE HALL TO THE PLACE OF BOYS, THE PLACE OF GIRLS.

SIXTEEN BOYS.
ALL TOGETHER IN THAT PLACE. THE LAVA-TORY.

EIGHT AT THE TROUGH, THE OTHER EIGHT WAITING, BEHIND.

WATER-SWEATED PIPES DRIPPING...TRICKLING AND, YES,

TINKLING...DOWN THE ZINC-EY SIDES OF WHERE HALF THE BOY-HALF NUMBER ONED TOGETHER, GIGGLING...

EIGHT ALPHABETIZED BOYS, WAITING OUR TIME, BEHIND,

WAITING TO THE LIQUID HISS AND BUBBLE, IN BOUNCING TUMMY PAIN AND KIDNEY POP.

SIXTEEN BOYS A'GIGGLE, TINKLERS A'HAND, DOING OR WAITING... NUDGING, SPLASHING, SPRAYING...

'TIL ONE, WHO COULD NOT WAIT, NUDGED BETWEEN AND WET HIS NEIGHBOR

AND THE NEIGHBOR WETTED HIM, THEY THEIR NEIGHBORS BOTH, THEY WETTED...

TIL BACK ROW, WAITING, COULD WAIT NO LONGER AND WADED IN TO THE TINKLER PARTY...

WAVING ALOFT OR LOW, FENCING, JOUSTING... BALLISTIC ARCS, TRAJECTORIES, DEAD-EYE SHOTS,

SOAKING SPRINKLES GANGED ON FATTY STEVIE HARTRANFT HOLDING US BACK WITH ACK-ACK BURSTS AND LAUGHS



SHOE SOAKS, SOCKS SEEPED THROUGH, PANTS AND SHIRTS...

UNTIL OUR LEAN YOUNG LITTLE LADY, SHE WHO WAS NOT OUR MOTHER, BLEW WIDE THE DOOR AND WONDERED JUST WHAT WE THOUGHT WE DID?

AND MARCHED US, DRIPPING, PAST THE CRISP GIRLS, WAITING. MARCHED US, LAUGHING, PAST THE DRY GIRLS, GIGGLING.

THAT WAS TINKLER FUN.

BUT THIS OTHER THIS.
THIS THIS FROM WHERE I CAME!
GETS COMPLICATED BUT YOU HAVE TO LEARN SOMETIME!

IT ALL MADE SENSE.

THE NIGHTS LOST IN MY BED, TURNED BY DARK AND TERROR, CRAWLING DOWN THE HALL TO MY PARENTS ROOM ON HANDS AND KNEES

OR ON TUMMY, SHRIVLING PAST THE LONG SIDE HALL TO THE ATTIC WHERE THE DARK THINGS WAITED...

AND IN THEIR STARLIT ROOM, PULLING DOWN THE TENTED SHEETS FELL SAFELY SLEEPING ON THEIR FLOOR, BY THEIR FEET.

THEN THEIR ANGER IN THE MORNINGS, FINDING ME THERE, WONDERING... WONDERING, JUST WHAT DID I THINK I WAS DOING?

QUIET KID. SHELTERED BY THE MOUNTAIN IN OUR YARD...

PROTECTED BY THE BOOKS BENEATH MY BED... BY THE OPERA, SATURDAYS...

BY MOTHER, NANNA, POP-POP AND DADDY.

THEN...OH, PUGGY! YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE FACTS OF LIFE SOMETIME!

AND I RAN, RAN TO MY ROOM, AND CLOSED ME IN AND SHELTERED THEM FROM WHAT I WAS AND COULD BECOME.

TIL I KILLED THEM, ONE BY ONE, THEN, BIT BY BIT,

BECAME THEM, ALL.



MAGICS

TO LIST THE MAGICS... CLOSE AT HAND WERE:

RUBBER BANDS
AND LENGTHS OF CLOTHESLINE ROPE -THE BRAIDED KIND, NOT THE PLASTIC STUFF WHICH,
WEATHERED, RUSTY, BROKE

STRING AND WIRE. A CANDLE'S END.

A HANDKERCHIEF OR BETTER YET A THROWN OUT SHEET.

AN OATMEAL TUBE, A WHITE OWL BOX, PRINCE ALBERT TIN

AN ORANGE CRATE, ONE ROLLER SKATE. AN ESSO MAP OF A DISTANT PLACE.

SOME EMPTY SPOOLS. SOME RAILROAD SPIKES.

REAL TOOLS, STRAIGHT NAILS, RIGHT SIZED BOLTS AND UNSTRIPPED SCREWS.

AND TOPSY, BLIND, WHO WALKED REMEMBERED PATTERNS THROUGH AUNT FLORENCE' LABYRINTH OF SLENDER WOODS AND CHATTER CHILL-GLASS CRITTERS

AND NEVER SHIVERED ONE, NOT ONE, TO PIECES ON THE FLOOR.

NOW FURTHER OFF, BUT NEAR: THE NEIGHBORHOOD --ITS SHAPE AND PLACES

HOLES AND COVERS,

THORNS AND TURTLES, WITCHES, WONDERS

THE SPACE BETWEEN US. US WITHIN THE SPACE.

THE SCHOOL, THE YARD, THE NIGHT.

AND FURTHER YET: THE MOUNTAIN, OUR HORIZON.

THE RIVER COMING IN FROM WHEN? AND GOING OUT WHERE?

THE ROADS ADVANCING THROUGH, AROUND US.

THE RAILWAY YARDS AND LINES ASSEMBLING IN THE TOWN, DIVERGING OUT FOREVER.



THE PLANES WHICH FLEW SO HIGH ABOVE AS TO BE BEYOND A WISH.

AND THE BELLS AT MIDNIGHT IN THE ECHO TOWN BELOW.

MORE DISTANT YET WERE JUNGLES, NATIVES; CARAVANS AND DESERTS;

DISTANT LEMPLES, ANGRY GODS.

THE TUMBLING TUMMULT OF THE WATERS' FALL OUT WEST, UP NORTH OR FAR AWAY IN AFRICA.

CANYONS, VELDT, SAVANAH, STEPPE AND TUNDRA.

TALLER THAN OUR LIVES, THE TREES IN FAR-OFF FORESTS, DEEPER THAN OUR DEATHS.

AND BEYOND: THE FROMDS AND FERNS AND TRILOBITES. BRONTOSAUR, TRICERATOP;

THE MOON AND MARS FAR ANTARES AND

THE PAST. THE FUTURE. AND A PLAN

WERE MAGICS, ALL, AND OURS.



IN THE ATTIC

ANOTHER PICTURE I REMEMBERED, FEMEMBER STILL...

MOTHER THERE, ALONE. A CHILD, OH FIVE OR SIX. STANDING BY A STOOL, A PIANO STOOL.

PLEATED GRAY, A MIST BEHIND HER AND A POTTED FERN BESIDE. HER NAME WAS FERN, YOU SEE.

AND HER. ALONE. STANDING, STARING THROUGH THE PICTURE, UP AHEAD. YEARS AHEAD, AT ME.

AND HER, ALONE, ABOUT TO CRY, TO BREAK, BUT STILL A SMILE ON TOP. BUT THAT WAS HER. OF COURSE.

"WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SAD?" I ASKED.

"I DIDN'T KNOW," SHE SAID. "I THOUGHT THAT WHEN YOU HAD A PICTURE TAKEN
THAT YOU WOULD BE NO MORE. THAT AFTER THAT, I WOULDN'T BE!"

NOW, THE MUSEUM OF MY PARENT'S LIVES HELD NO EXHIBIT OF MY FATHER'S DAYS ALONE.

OUR ATTIC WAS A RECORD OF MY MOTHER'S LIFE AND BRINGING UP, PHOTOGRAPHS AND BROWNING BOOKS WITH FADING WAXY ORANGE SCRAWLS,

AND WOOLY, MOTHBALL-PUNGENT CLOTHING... HER KILTS AND WIGS AND STIFFLY RUSTLING SKIRTS FROM BALLET CLASS AND OTHER DANCES.

A CERTIFICATE OF PENMANSHIP.

AND PICTURED BACK, HER PARENT'S, THEIRS.
THEIR BROTHERS, SISTERS, AUNTS AND COUSINS BACK AND BACK ON BACK;

POP-POP'S TROPHIES, URNS, MEMORIALS;
NANNA'S TATTING, SHAWLS AND DUST-LACE THINGS...

ALL PILED AND PACKED IN PAINTED BRASS-BOUND TRUNKS OF SPLINTERING WOOD, LINED WITH YELLOWED PAPER -- POLKA-BLUE BUT FADED DOTS --

WHICH WE PLUNDERED NOW AND THEN FOR HOLIDAYS OR COSTUME TIMES OF YEAR OR AT OTHER TIMES, FOR FUN,

TO BANGLE OUT IN RAUCOUS BEADS AND MARBLE PEARLS ON DRYING STRING,

A CROWN OR SAVAGE CHARM...

BUT OF MY FATHER, NOTHING.



THINGS OF THEIRS, YES; THEIR TOGETHER THINGS.
OLD CLOTHES AND HATS NOW CHARMING, DUMB OR CRUNCHED AND FLAKING DECADES BACK.

AND PICTURES, THERE, FROM "ON THE ROAD" -- THEY SAID, FROM WHEN THEY DANCED FROM TOWN TO TOWN ALL DOWN THE COAST, AND BACK

"WHEN YOU RAN AWAY." POP-POP LAUGHED, "TO JOIN THE CIRCUS." AND LAUGHED AGAIN.

WHERE SHE MET MY FATHER. THEN MARRIED HIM. THOSE THINGS, YES.

PICTURES OF MY MOTHER-SWAN REACHING UP ON TOES,
HER HELMET HAIR IN MOLDED CURLS, REACHING ON BEYOND THE PICTURE'S
EDGE...
FROM A BOOK-TO-BE CALLED, "FERN" SHE SAID. A BOOK WHICH NEVER

OR THEM ON SOUTHERN BEACHES OR FURTHER SOUTH IN FLORIDA, A PYRAMID OF PERFECT FORM, OF BODIES PERFECT TO THE SUN AND SAND.

MOTHER, FATHER, OTHERS, FRIENDS...
THOSE SPOKEN OF THE TIMES I HID MY EARS AND WOULD NOT HEAR OF
BEING "ON THE ROAD" IN DANCE...

BUT OF MY FATHER, HIS LIFE BEFORE, A NOTHING, THERE, TO SEE OR HOLD.

OF HIS CHILDHOOD...NOTHING. HIS PARENTS -- NOW BOTH DEAD WHOM I HARDLY KNEW -- NOTHING. OF HIS BROTHERS, SISTERS...NOT A THING.

NOR AUNTS AND UNCLES, THOSE OLD SMALL PEOPLE GLIMPSED THERE AND THEN IN CHURCH, AT FUNERALS, MOSTLY,

THE DISTANT ONES ACROSS THE ROOM IN TEARS, NODDING TO SOME SORROW I COULD NOT FEEL, IN BLACK AND WAILING WRINKLED SKIN

AND HUSKING, VOICED THE NAME OF HE OR SHE NOW GOING, GONE. ROUNDING IT WITH ANOTHER TONGUE, ANOTHER SPEECH... SOMETHING I WOULD NEVER SPEAK.

NOT EVER. NEVER SPEAK NOR KNOW...

OF THESE, THE MUSEUM OF MY PARENTS HOUSE HAD NOT ONE ARTIFACT OR TOUCH.

NOTHING OF MY FATHER'S LIFE ALONE. NOT A THING AT ALL

I WONDERED WHY...



DANCER

MY MOTHER WROTE MY SHAME ON THE FLOOR WITH HER TOES.

THE GUYS WERE AROUND

PLAYING.

TAKING APART MY TRAINS

WHEN MOTHER CAME IN FLOWING.

FLOATING.

DRIFTING LIKE A FINGERTIP ACROSS MY LIPS.

OH MY GOD!

OH, JE-SUS CHRIST!

IN PIROUETTES!



THE MAIN THING

"THIS IS THE MAIN THING," IS WHAT POP-POP SAID, LAST, LOOKING AT ME,

HE, A-DWINDLE IN THE SHEETS, TUBED TO THE BED BELOW; THE LONG CHAIN LAMP DUSTING DOWN FROM CEILINGS PLASTER BROWN, AND PAINTED SAINTS AROUND.

EYES, BRUSHBURNED HOLES IN HIS FACE, THINNER, NOW THAN WHEN I LOOKED LAST, THAT FACE.

WHILE NUNS AND NURSES SLUMBERED PAST BLACK AND WHITE IN THE HALLS BEYOND, WHERE I WAITED, WAITING TO LISTEN AT LAST.

WHERE ALL THE WOMEN GATHERED ROUND, MY MOTHER, HIS DAUGHTER, HIS OTHER DAUGHTERS, MY AUNTS, WATCHING HIM.

WAITING. WAITING FOR HIM TO GO.

EYES CLUTCHING ONE ANOTHER, HANDS TOUCHING, HOLDING HIM OR NUDGING FURTHER TOWARD HIS GOING OUT...

GOING OUT LIKE A BALLOON ON A HEADBOARD, GOING OUT LIKE A FINGER 'CROSS THE CHEEK.

GOING OUT LIKE DUSK, GOING OUT LONG LAST.

"THIS IS THE MAIN THING," IS WHAT POP-POP SAID AT ME.

WHILE

HANDS -- ALL KNUCKLES, NOW -- WAVED INWARD TOWARD HIMSELF AND OUT.

WHAT IS THE MAIN THING?

WHAT?

WELL, THERE WAS CARSONIA PARK...

THROUGH THE SMILING CLOWN MOUTH

IN THE MORNING, IN THE EVENING...

WATER SLAPPING THE WOODEN DRUM, THE BOAT. EVENRUDE PUTTER IN THAT DRY ROT HOLE

AIN'T WE GOT FUN?

POP-POPING OUT, THAT WOODEN HOLE SHOVING THE BLACK NIGHT WATER ASIDE, POP-POP AND I.



ON SHORE, BUMPING BACKWARD, THE MIDWAY BRIGHTS, STEEL HISS AND SHRIEK OF THE ROLLER COASTER,

MACHINERY DRAWN AND SKETCHED BY LIGHTS.

BULLET TUMBLING, DRAGGING IT'S FLAME BEHIND, CATCHING ITSELF IN THE CIRCLE, SNIFFING ITS TAIL.

DRIFTING BACK, THE WOMEN ON THE SHORE, HOPEFUL IN THE EVENING. THANK GOODNESS, THIS WAS THE LAST THING, THIS DAY. THANK GOODNESS.

WAVING THEIR HANDS AT US SETTING MANFULLY FORTH ON CARSONIA LAKE.

PUGGY, HE SAID AT LAST, IN OUR HOLE IN THE WATER. NOW, PUGGY. YOU REMEMBER THIS SOMETIME.

NOW, I'D HAD A BAD DAY.

THE WOMEN! MOTHER, NANNA, THE PORTLY AUNTS -- IDA AND EDWINA!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF CARSONIA PARK? TO COME AND LOOK OR BE WHIZZING SCARED TO BUMPY DEATH!

I DIDN'T ASK. I KNEW, OF COURSE: THE FEARS. THE FEARS.

OF FALLING LIKE A MEAT BALLOON, AND GROUND LIKE BURGER IN THE RUSTY COGS,

OR OVERSHOT, IN AN ARC...ALOFT FOREVER OR DWINDLING OFF WHILE MOTHER SHRIEKED AND POINTED

WHILE THE PORTLY AUNTS HUGGED SO LONG AND TIGHT THEY FRIED TOGETHER IN THE SAWDUST SAND.

WHILE NANNA CLICKED AND SHOOK HER HEAD, I TOLD HIM SO... I TOLD HIM THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

THAT WAS THE POINT OF CARSONIA PARK.

NOW THIS IS WHAT I'D DONE!

MY WEIGHT WAS GUESSED. CORRECTLY. AND MY AGE, ONE YEAR OFF. TOO YOUNG.

I'D TOSSED -- AND MISSED -- THREE WOODEN RINGS, AT THE NECKS OF GREEN-GLASS BOTTLES.

I'D BEEN TAKEN -- TAKEN -- ON THE CAROUSEL. BEEN SAT, AND BELTED, HUGGED AND NURTURED.

PADDED BETWEEN IDA AND EDWINA UPON A BENCH. THE SWAN I THINK. WHILE EVERYWHERE THE BRASS AND WOODEN HORSES PUMPED



ALL OTHERS, LEANING OUT AND DOWN AT THE SWIRLY WORLD

'TIL NANNA, MOTHER, POP-POP, ALL, BUTTERED AND BLED TOGETHER IN THE RING-A-LING THUNDER CLASH AND BRASH OF CALLIOPE STEAM AND SYMBOLS.

NO ROLLER COASTER. NO BULLET. NO BUMP CARS.

ALMOST...

ALMOST...THE OLD MILL HOUSE OF HORRORS.

UNTIL, MOTHER, LISTENING AT THE CREAKS AND MOANS, THE SLAP POCK WATER AS THE BOATS CAME BUMPING OUT,

'TIL MOTHER, SQUINTING AT THE SOUNDS BENEATH THE ROUND BASS THRUM OF MILLWHEEL CREAK AND GROAN, THE SHRIEKS OF KIDS, OF LOVERS

UNTIL MOTHER, LAST, BELOW IT ALL. DETECTED THERE THE VOICE OF RATS.

"PUGGY," HE SAID IN OUR WOODEN HOLE IN THE WATER. "PUGGY, YOU'LL REMEMBER THIS SOMETIME.

"THE HANDS WILL HOLD YOU BACK. THE BONY FINGERS, FLESH, THE FLESH OF WOMEN'S HANDS. CARSONIA PARK'S FOR YOU, NOT THEM. NOT FOR THE BONY HANDS."

AND THERE, AT HIS LAST, I REMEMBERED IT.

THIS IS THE MAIN THING. WHAT?

WELL, HIS STORIES, THEY WOULD BE GONE FOREVER? FOREVER, IF I DID NOT TELL THEM; GONE?

HIS DAYS, THOSE HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS WHEN HE AND ABNER AND ISRAEL, HIS BROTHERS, WHEN HE AND THEY PLAYED HALLOWE'EN

AND TOOK TO PIECES THEIR NEIGHBOR'S CART AND CARRIED IT ABOVE TO THE STABLE ROOF.

REASSEMBLED IT THERE FOR MORNING. THAT?

WELL, THERE WAS THAT CHRISTMAS...

FEASTS AND PRESENTS.
UNCLES AND AUNTS AND COUSINS MOUSING FORTH TO OUR HOUSE.

HIS HOUSE -- OURS!
ROUND WITH SMELLS OF ROASTING BIRD AND CRANBERRY SAUCE.

BULGED WITH ONIONS IN WHITE WHEAT AND BUTTER GRAVY.

POP-POP, THERE, THE FOUNDER OF THE FEAST, DWINDLED BY HIS FAMILY,



IN HIS HOUSE, OUR HOUSE,

POP-POP SIFTED AMONG US, THERE, AND SHOWED US ALL HIS GIFTS, AFRAID THAT WE HAD MISSED -- NOT NOTICED THEM...

THE WINE NO ONE WOULD DRINK,

THE BOOKS I ALREADY HAD AND, OF COURSE, HAD READ BY THEN.

AND THE WHISPERS IN THE KITCHEN

THE WHISPERS OF THE WOMEN, MY MOTHER, HER SISTERS SHAKING HEADS, AND CLICKING KITCHEN TONGUES.

"HE'LL BE OFF TO HER, TONIGHT. HE WILL!"

SHAKING HEADS, CLICKING TONGUES...

"I REMEMBER MOTHER WEEPING AS HE DROPPED A DOLLAR IN HER LAP, PASSING."

SHAKING HEADS, CLICKING TONGUES. YES.

AND WHEN HE PASSED FROM THE HOUSE -- AS PREDICTED IN THE KITCHEN -- NO ONE NOTICED.

BUT NOW, THIS, THIS WAS THE MAIN THING, THIS.

THIS IS THE MAN, I TOLD MYSELF, WAS CUT FROM HIS WEDDING PICTURE THE MAIN THING? THAT?

FACE AND SKIN HISSING IN TOWARD BONE BENEATH, THE BONE BENEATH YEARNING TO PEEL OUTWARD INTO THE ROOM, INTO THE PAST FOREVER.

EYES BULGING.

EYES BULGING WHICH READ TO ME SEATED ON HIS LAP,

SEATED ON HIS LAP ON THE GLIDER ON OUR PORCH

AND I, OH, THREE OR FOUR, EYED HIS FINGER FLOW THE PAGE, THE WORDS,

AND DREAMED HIS FINGER BIRTHED THE WORLDS WHICH DAWNED ALIVE BEHIND MY EYES...
BELFRY ARCHES, MUFFLED OARS; MIDDLESEXES, VILLAGE AND FARMS.

"THIS IS THE MAIN THING," 'OP-POP SAID, AT LAST. TO ME. WHO HAD KILLED HIS WIFE, MY NANNA, OH, YEARS AGO, NOW.

"THIS IS THE MAIN THING," POP-POP SAID, LAST AS THE WOMEN WAITED FOR HIM TO GO.



NO. THIS IS THE MAIN THING. WAVING LIKE A FLAME IN BREATH. THEN GONE.

TAKE POP-POP'S HAND SOMEONE SAID, GO ON.

NO I SAID. NO. AND WENT.



WORK IN PROGRESS

Nete: The following is on except, and the beginning, of a much langer piece. Space restricted us from printing it ally nestablise integed us from electing entirely.—ed.

of the sofa, and all the fine young ladies are back in their beds for their mornings, and the wine has turned to vinegar on my breath and in my glass and in my mouth and in my stomach, and, if I could see it at this time, in my mind as well-just before night-breaking day I turn off the light and lay my head down. The room, ten feet by ten, is pi' aw and my booted feet are cald at the battam Just before daybreak I lay my head on dark, and I suppose that I am finally alone.

the wall across the room. Down the wall it goes leaving the mud red and green phasphorescence But ance again the night does not end with the light. Through the green curtained window in the corner of my bed the red dims up and moves slowly down the shelves of books and papers on glowing brighter and brighter an Walt Whitman and The Infernal Machine and The Tablets of Sumer and The Primer of Fermal Logic. And suddenly it is another marning in anather room. And there, glowing red in that morning's sun, is Terry Hebhart and our own small war.

"It must be summer," I think, "If it was winter we wauld be going to school, and we're not, so it must be summer." It was summer; I wasn't going to Fifth and Spring that day, and my light short pajamas were wet with the sweat of our house which was not air conditioned and which was an Fourth Street. I am eleven today. Yes, then it is summer and near its end too. So now all the days must be used with ever so much care, never wasted in sleeping late or reading in books with no pictures till noon spells aur day—Terry's and

mine—into late afternoon, early evening, bed time, breaths of days.

there, six back yards away and across the alley is Now morning is an aur back porch, damp with its green and blue bird waking breath drying the domp small hairs an the side of my head. And Ferry, drying his hair and eyes on his back porch.

with both hands and arms. Then that split second hanging in mid air till the concrete alley whipand pick him up and it cost us two dollars, is running one, two, three, four, five, six back yards up, and there is Terry standing, the whole bot-Our gate, wooden framed and wire bodied, never ta be apened because the last time yau did, you let it apen and the dog got out and we had to arive all the way aut to the humane society leaped over in three moves long practiced: right foot an bottom, left foot on top, and push over cracks the whole bottom of my feet, and I am toms of his both feet whip-cracked on the concrete.

That was right, it was September 2, 1953. It "Today's my birthday," I said, "I'm eleven."

that September 2nd was my birthday. Once, on a very shameful night, when I joined the Cub mother when my birthday was, because I had forgotten and they needed to know before they was only on September 2nds that I remembered Scouts, I had to run all the way home to ask my would let me be a Cub.

"So? Bob Ott and Dave Brown and Dave Mc-Allister and Jaey and Dave McDermott and I are going to have a war today. Do you want to play?"

"I don't know. Where do you think it ought to "You going to be in Korea?"

This was the way all our wors started on Fourth Street. The real war in the real world was de-cided not by us, but an Fourth Street our wars

2

were carefully selected plastic and rubber and firecracked battles which lasted till lunch and then to supper and then to bed and there fought till the next day when all the dead chose sides again.

Ott, and sametimes Missy and Trissy Fritz, were the enemy—always. And always if the enemy was small and yellow and slant-eyed, we were "Let's be Jerries and fight in the jungle," I said, and we were. I "I'll'ed Hitler all the way back to my yard, and "Schwinehunted" over our fence and "!'!!"ed to our kitchen where mother made me eat don't want to be a Jap again." Somehaw, by choice always, Terry and I, and sometimes Bob Japs. Nations meant nothing to us on Fourth Street. "t dan't know, we fought Japs yesterday. the Cheerios.

My mother and father had gotten me, among hot hurring red sides of fingers, useless presents, a Matel Burp Gun, a very useful, noisy, present soon to be taken away for firing it in ald man Hoover's forbidden yard at his forbidden window at his yellow-winkled face. And of course, I knew the finger warming and ear saving, buttoning and zippering up the front, wrapping at the chin, pulling over the shoes and clipping up the legs with of all of these hings days befare.

"Do you want to wait till daddy gets home from work to open your presents, ar da you want "it's my birt'.day," I said. to apen them now?"

This was the test of my gratitude for eleven years of Faurth Street. I couldn't apen them all, of them, I just lived there and every birthday and Christmas they gave me presents. But the Jerries course. Daddy had bought them by working for needed that burp-gun.

"Well-could I open just ane of them naw?" 'I'll open the rest when daddy gets home."

This kind of compromise usually pleased my comercy's when we, the three of us, went to the mother and since the Christmas buying was only a few months away it ensured good feelings at

The boxes were hidden well—in the usual places. When they were arranged an the livingshaking each one, then cautiously and shyly picked room floor, the Matel Burp Gun was in the small boy with non-descript puppy playing with a red package, I went from box to box picking and ball in a blue and green grassed field wrapped sixth floor toy department. he one with my finger.

crete and wooden gated and concrete way back to "'Open it," my mother would smile from above. And it was the gun, and I thanked my mother with a hug and kiss and ran, "I'll"ing all the con-Ferry's yard.



ξ ··

When the Cheerios and juices of early Septemrow, when they must be eaten slower because it back with an "I'll" all of his own with an unbeatable whump-whack crack of the heels of his ber second morning were put away until temorwasn't your birthday then, it was nearly ten "I'll Hitler!" I said to Terry who always shot o'clock. Wars on Fourth Street started at ten o'clock

"Did you choose up yet? Look what I gost"
"Do you have any shootin' crackers for it?"

sneakers.

pains of scuffed knees, and rolling box topped wagon-tanks—is as much a part of the war game as Joey and David and Dave and Missy and Trissy parents never could quite realize that noise—the loud noise of shooting crackers and shouts and I didn't have any, and usually didn't because and Terry and I and the Matel Burp Gun.

"No, I don't have any, but that's alright because and I showed him and it did and we were pleased it makes a noise anyway when you wind it up," because now we had a silencer and could killin silence.

"Did you choose up yet?"
"No, Joey and David are still eating, and Missy and Trissy can't come out today. Dave McAllister'll be out soon, I don't know about the others. They'll be out soon though, I guess."

of that September when all the fine young men It was late on one of the last summer mornings banded together in the back alley of our homes on Fourth Street for ane of the last battles of that warm marning wind dying year.

school would begin, and our hair would dry in the small, square, green-walled, and black tar floored world of Mrs. Feinerfrock and her multiplication Yes, the tank was to be used that day because soon the early walks to Fifth and Spring grade ables which you never will learn, and the tank took

do that after school because you had to try, at least to learn Mrs. Feinerfrock's numbers. But now we who was very mean early in our mornings that were his evenings. Then we all looked for rope. had the time, and bath sides of the war helped least an hour to put together, and you couldn't drag the scuff-maroon wagon from our cellar, and then to find the Motorola T.V. box with the small square hole on top in Terry's cellar—being very nights and slept lightly on the second floor and careful not to wake Terry's father who worked

in our back yard; it was part of the swing my father made for me when I was just seven and very light, which got lower and lower before it and fluffy, and that if you pulled at it, small tufis of downy hair held, then came free, then, if you blew on it, driffed high up to where the birds Rope was important to us. it was something which parents used to build our world, it was a force in my life because it was a part of the late afternoon, late summer tent that my father made broke and I roll fell to the dirt between the back up and found the broken end of the rope, which porch and the washline pole. Then I picked myself was limp and grey, and found that it was very soft were, and was gone.

This was the magic touch of rope to us. Now, when we could find some, and we always did, it would be used to hold the hole-topped box to the maroon wagon, and by eur hands, and eur rope, we made eur tank.

Jap, sometimes, because I had seen Rocketship The tank was Jerry that day. Sometimes it was K-M, it was Martian, but always it was Terry's and Mine. And always it was built by all of us around the one inside.

If I was in the tonk it was this way: You sat in the open wagon and the Big Motorola T.V. box was placed over your head, and it gat suddenly very

28

dark and very warm and the voices of Terry and Joey and David and all the other late morning sounds of Fourth Street's alley got hallow and dishe top down closer to your head and the sides dusted, knee-scraping alley floor shane up through the space between the wagon metal and ripple ided cardboard bottom of the box. The knots hen the rapel And then the tying, and every knot hat drew the rope tight around the box drew further out till the light from the white, pebbleont and you were all of a sudden very alone. squeeked tight, and you were in.

Then the choosing that I couldn't be part of because I had chosen the tank-side.

which was always called the "Americans". There g back yard, and Clinton Neewig's yard, which was which ran down to Madison Avenue which ran into Douglas Street which ran uphill, past Missy and Terry would have been on our side. Yes, that was the way of it, and probably David McAllister, too. Joey and David McDermot, who were as inseparable as their names -- they were always "Joey n David"-would probably be on the other side, were so many wars on Fourth Street that the details of this particular war are lost. So are the numbers and names of the fighters of our side. Matel Burp Gun. So are the exact places of the fighting—except that it probably centered around Harold Dorwin's Fourth Street facing front yard, and Old man Hoover's back yard, and The Triplets', whose names I will now probably never know, next to ours, or around the corner of the alley So are the weapons—except for the tank Trissy's house, and into Fourth street.

ŧ If the details are forgotten, the rules never will be, because the rules were always the same. The Americans" had to fig.,1 against greater odds, two armies -- ours was usually about ten, the Americans" about nine or eight, because,

minutes before he could play again. If in that time was over and one side was the winner. If it wasn't he could fight again—sometimes alone—until ane side or the other was destroyed. It was usually hard to determine exactly who was dead when, missed a man. Since our bullets consisted mostly of or Dave, or Bob, arguments always broke out among the fighters; Terry swearing that he had shot Dave right in the head, Dave overlapping ferry that he was at best only wounded, and could keep fighting and that he had probably gotten Terry before he had been shot anyway. would split up for ten minutes, then hide, then hunt each other down—on Fourth Street, in the pack alleys, on Madison Avenue, in the close and dark warmed passages between houses, in the delicately kept and cloths grabbing rose arched lawn of Old Man Hoover, until one army or the other was killed or called in for lunch or supper or bed. Each man when killed had to wait ten the rest of his army was killed or captured, the war because we could never tell when you hit or "dow, dow, you're dead, Terry" or Joey 'n David, which meant that they usually lost-the two armies

As our days got hotter, our wars grew older and our sounds became more and more and more the voices of small wild hush-breaking animals.

And here my parents ask me at warm supper nights. "What do you do with the wagon, and that big box?"

"The tonk? Why that's a tonk. I just sit in it, and Terry pulls it down the alley. I'm inside it, to Madison Avenue and Joey and David, and Bob Ott, and Missy and Trissy throw stones at it, and pattom of the hill we turn over. I like the noise of and then he lets it go, and we roll down the alley the wagon handle drags on the alley and at the the stones," I say, "it sounds real."

What do you mean," they say "real?"

C ハ

"Like a real war," I say.

"And then?" my father asks.

because the idea of dying, and growing up, and shaving, and kissing, and dancing, and marrying and having children and living a life apart from "Then, I'm dead." I answer with embarrassment Fourth Street, and dying away from here, embarrasses me. When I was a child, death lasted ten minutes, and while I was dead in the wreck of the tank at Terry and all the other Jerries of that time and of over the olley off Fourth Street, I climbed out of the bottom of the alley near Madison Avenue, that place fought our tea-shirted dirty cellar jungle war for me. And when I was a child when ten minutes had gone by when the sun had gane high the tank and went to join the rest of the battle.

were always places where, for some reason never really understandable to us, we didn't belong.
"Go where you belong. Who're your parents; old women wore long dresses and lived dark lives pants and colored and floppy flannel shirts. And There were old women and old men, too. The in houses apart from the old men, wha wore baggy all their dark vined and rose stuck back yoros

go up and play there, you don't belong here."

,

grouse; We'll burn it down, burn it down, burn it down, then go to town, you dirty grouse." And then, our voices breathing softer and softer from outside the dark brown, turning black, rusting wire fences that kept us from burning the house of the ing, herself, stuck because she knew where each Our threats rang in whispered rhymes after their threats: "We'll burn your house, you dirty dirty grouse, then we watched the old woman rearrange the vines of the sticker bushes—never beand every stick-point had been and was now-in exactly the crazy pattern they were in before we had fought there. Then she would turn and look

ta ourselves, still holding her gaze, "Til burn your house you dirty grouse," and she would rustle--until the next time we fought the same back and we would stand still and whisper, now hush her long skirted self back into the dark dry door of her back porch, and elick was gone forbattle in the same wrong place.

tinued the game, and the noises of Terry killing times, but not often, Joey killing Terry or David And despite old men and old women we con-Joey and my killing David-though it was somekilling me-drifted and rolled and bounced down all the light dying day.

them. And ance past us, we would leap out and the Mattel Burp-Gun would spring click chatter at There was Terry and I, hiding, dirty and alone in the dark warm cobwebbed passage between their backs-we could shoot them in the backs two row-houses on Fourth Street. There we waited for the enemy, who whisper and tiptoe watched us past the passage in which we waited for because we were the enemy—and they were dead for ten minutes. ģ

the trees on Fourth Street, and the white concrete alley would grey and grow, itself, darkly dusty. hard. Then the light would come darker through If the wreckage of the tank in the alley marked the beginning of the battle, the mark of the near days end was a small sharp chill when the wet of our tee shirts would suddenly stiffen and grow

Fourth Street, across the alley and down toward the trees of Madison Avenue. I think they were We left the wagon and the box at the bottom of the alley because that was a good excuse to go out again after supper. On the way hame-my father always called me back from the jungle or Mars or the desert with a single sliding whistle note from the back porch-there were usually black shadowed birds flying in an angle from

8

there on my eleventh birthday. I wondered what they had done all the war long day as I three step leaped over the back fence to our yard. I wondered.

"Be careful with the fence. Do you want break 11?"

2

"You broke it doing that last week. Be careful I still sort of wondered.

with it; if you do it again you and I are really going to tangle." By then they were gane.

Then there was the gaing in, and I guess I went into the house before my father because he always liked to stare mad at me as I passed by him ashamed for nearly breaking the gate now and for breaking it last week.

Lawrence P. Santoro

3

Land of the second of the second of

زس